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G A. Wilts 4°. 72

WILTS -

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Ed

For Britton's Nat. Wiltshire.

G. A. W. 4°. 72.

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Rev. G. Grable 22
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preserved as it is believed to exhibit the
handwriting of the author.

A

CONCISE HISTORY

OF

TROWBRIDGE,

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT

OF

The Court, Castle, & Watch,

THE

Church, Monuments, &c.

BY

JAMES BODMAN.

Bristol:

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1814.



Dedicated,
By Permission,
To THOMAS TIMBRELL, Esq.
Lord of the Manor,
And to
The Freeholders, Subscribers, and
Public at Large,
Especially
The Inhabitants of the
Town and Liberty of Trowbridge,
This History is offered
As a token of Respect, by
Their obedient and humble Servant,

JAMES BODMAN.

P R E F A C E.

NOTHING could have prevailed with me to undertake the History of Trowbridge, but that strong claim which some of the old families have on me, as being a native of the town; and a descendant of two very antient families, viz. Selfe, and Harford. And in prosecuting my attempt, I trust it will appear, that I have aimed at nothing but simple truth! And though I have not attempted to shew its inhabitants to be the immediate descendants of Troy; yet I think I have proved them to be very antient: and the clothing trade to have begun almost in its infancy. And though some of my readers may justly say, that the History is too simple, and void of that jewel which enhances the value of every history, viz. a composition of literature: yet I trust it contains the (gem of) truth, which exceeds every other ornament; and this will be of more real benefit to my readers than reading the elaborate writings of Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, Hobbs, or Bollingbrook, or even (their friend in disguise) the learned Mr. Belsham.

And here I cannot help digressing from my Preface, by asking those gentlemen who are fellow thinkers with the above renowned atheists, for they are no less so, though they are clothed in the garb of the deist, viz. If there was no creation, and nature brought forth the creature by its own spontaneous creating power; why is it that the creature, man, is not in every place? Why is it that whole islands, &c. are quite destitute of a human being? Or do these wise gentlemen attribute such failure of the animal, or human race, to be owing to a deficiency in dame nature, who has lost, or never had the power of conception. I well remember how the works of T. Paine were sought for, and admired by some of our wise heads, whose minds were like a sponge, to suck in all his doctrine. But it soon fell to the ground, for it would not bare the test.

To return, as to the History, I may raise the expectations of some, beyond the common elevation of such common things. But let me take leave to say, that to write a first History, is like a mariner going to sea without a rudder or compass, or one travelling by night in some trackless country, who has a certain object to go to, without light or path. But if I am so fortunate as to bring but a glimmering light out of this gross darkness, I hope the next attempt will be exceedingly visible; especially if undertaken by an abler hand. I do not expect to fare better than authors who are well qualified

for publishing—I do not expect to escape the sneers or reproaches of the envious man, or the find fault reader; who (to use the words of a great writer) is like a growling dog over his viands, who very often snarls and growls over that very food by which he is satisfying himself, and filling his stomach. Indeed, if I were to attempt to pay Messrs. Wearing & Co. for their trouble, in exposing the work before it is published, and abusing me by letter, and without the least cause, I could not do better than a grave scholar once did to a critic, who had selected all the faults of an author. The critic carried them all to this great man, supposing, and expecting his approbation and commendation for his great wisdom: the venerable man took them at his hand with seeming pleasure, and gave him a quantity of unwinnowed grain, to separate the grain from the husk: he set to work, and produced his grain and husk, well divided, and the grave old man made him an adequate recompence for his trouble. He gave him the husk or hulk for his trouble. So I have drawn the exact likeness of these wise envious critics, one of whom writes me a very abusive letter, and then advises me not to shew it, for fear I might expose myself, not considering himself in any danger of being reprobated as a clerk in a congregation, or in his character as a schoolmaster. But he regarded me. However, I know whence all of it springs; but all their envy and enmity, could not deter me from my purpose. There,

fore I have placed them in their own characters after the work. And when they choose to prove me as having went beside the truth, I will produce the ear-rings, bracelets, and staff. For though I have read that it was written over Plato's door ; " None may " may enter here, except he be a Geome- " trician," And that Socrates was condemned by his country for being too scrutinizing in seeking too much acquaintance with the habitations of the gods ; and thereby led himself into that new and fatal discovery which was the cause of his condemnation, that there was a first cause — a Supreme Being. And though I know by experience that the moment a man becomes a writer, he draws almost every man of superior wisdom or talent into the vortex of envy, by which he is whirled about till his reason is lost ; and except by a miracle, he sinks into the gulph of malice, yet all these could not deter me from attempting this History. But I can assure all the extra wise-heads (which live almost in a cluster) that I think them possessed of such wisdom and talents as I myself shall never attain to : therefore I resign the palm of wisdom to them, which I hope will satisfy them altogether.

I cannot close my Preface better than by informing my readers of two notable epochs or events which have taken place, at or near the time of publication, viz. The Divine blessing which Providence has manifested to the nations of Europe, in delivering them

from the tyranny of France, under the cruel reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, after twenty years war of devastation. But the second is a still more glorious blessing, viz. the establishment of Auxiliary and Branch Societies to the British and Foreign Bible Society, whose benign influence has in a few years reached not only nations, but almost every dark region in the known world. For even Idolaters, Roman Catholics, and almost every religion, and even Pagans, are now in possession of the word of God. So that the words of scripture may be well applied to Britain, and especially to the British and Foreign Bible-Society.— “From you sounded out the word of the Lord, &c.” And though we are not meritorious in the best of our actions, yet it is evident that God shews mercy to them that fear him, and shew themselves not only nominal, but real and active christians. Our nation crowns the world by its actions to the benighted race of mankind ; and may the Great Jehovah crown us with his blessings.

The AUTHOR on his BOOK, To his READERS.

RETURN my thoughts, that us'd to rove abroad
Pensive, to satisfy its large desire :
How often she has trac'd the starry road,
To seek in vain 'mongst them to tune a lyre.

There suns and stars in constant motion roll,
And fly, and whirl in orbs, from pole to pole :
Thus shew their Maker's works and boundless skill ;
And in each unknown track fulfill his will.

Some swiftly fly, and far out-strip the wind ;
Their wondrous motion to our thoughts are joint'd ;
Which, like that light, which flashes without controul,
And darts its sudden beams from pole to pole.

While others walk, or in slow motion turn,
And chill each region ; or like fire they burn.
Some move beneath, while some to heav'n are rais'd ;
But high or low, they all fulfill his praise.

But now my lyre to humbler notes is bent,
And in each strain some lesser things attempt :
From things sublime, where boundless Wisdom shews
That skill and greatness, creatures cannot know.

Here I attempt to shew my Maker's will ;
To prove in men some marks of heav'nly skill :
Though none of nature's laws he cannot move,
Yet God gives wisdom, nature to improve.

Thus man attempts to search out nature's store,
And dig from earth, huge stones ; yea, precious ore !
And thence remove it from its native station,
To some new place, or still more distant nation.

With these, fair temples are adorn'd or built,
Some make the palace shine in radiant gilt ;
From her rich ore, are vessels made of gold,
And of its refuse, things of courser mould.

From rugged rocks the uniform'd stones are brought,;
 And by that wisdom form'd, which God hath taught.
 Some stones are form'd to adorn a monarch's tomb,
 While others serve to build some noble town.

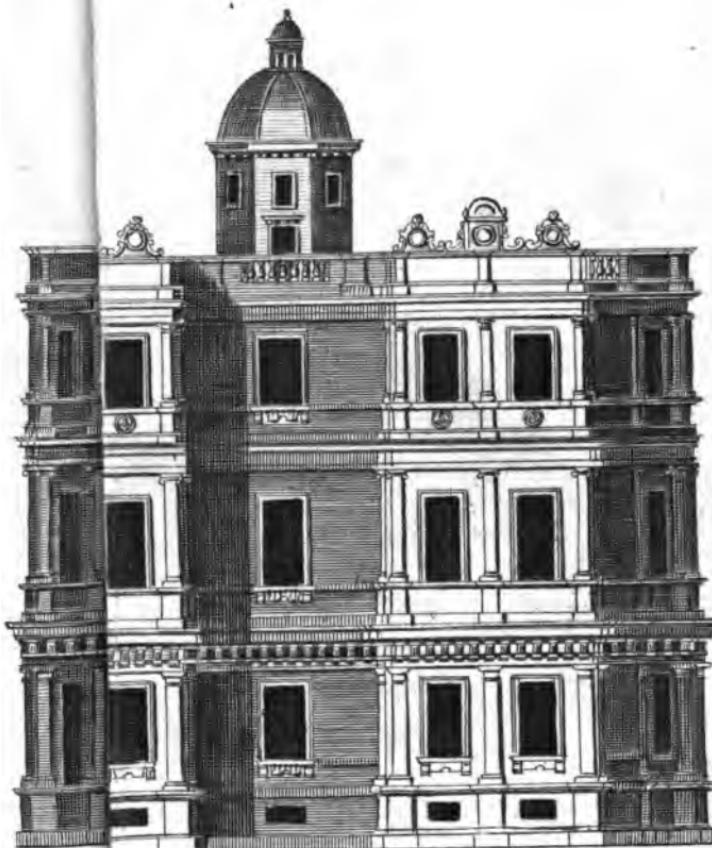
Now raise, my muse ! and take some humble seat,
 Beside some British bard, or, at his feet :
 Ask, Whence Britons came across her flood ?
 Or, In what plain they liv'd, or shady wood ?

Which of her sons did first a house project ?
 And, Who pursu'd the plan, as architect ?
 Or, Whence the tools for various kinds of work ?
 Did some one bring them from old Noah's ark ?

Who was that Nimrod that began to build ?
 Or, Who a mart began ? and, Where 'twas held ?
 What fortress first was built ? and, On whose land ?
 Or, Who its ruler ? Can we understand ?

Then I'll point out, with truth, that very man
 Who first built Trowbridge, or laid out its plan :
 To raise her noble Castle, with her s'yen tow'rs,
 And who began her watch, and fix'd the hours.

Then to my readers I'll be just and true,
 And say, By whom or when 'twas built, there is no clue ;
 But antient grandeur I have plainly shown,
 That British Monarchs liv'd in Trowbridge town.



Son, ^{the} Lord Weymouth.

rowbridge is surrounded by North Bradley parish, on the ; Winsfield, on the west ; Bradford, north ; Hilperton, east ; and Steeple Aston Common, on the east.

say, when it began to be built, when its first church was erected, or the foundation of its castle laid. Therefore I have the foundation of the town to seek after, without knowing when or by whom it was laid ; but it must have been at a very early period of the British epoch. It must have been noted at a very early period, if not before, soon after the conquest. And though it appears it has changed owners into a great many noble families, Lord Hungerford, Earl of Salisbury, Earl of Ailsford, &c. : tis evident also that it as often returned to the crown, which was its centre. If Sir Walter Long purchased the wood, called Ashton Wood, of the crown, tis very likely, Trowbridge being joined to it, both were crown lands. However this may appear to the reader, I shall make one remark, viz. on writing a first born history. In travelling old roads, we discover many faults in them ; and when a road is improved by being turned, &c. we often wonder at the weakness of those persons who first made it : but we too often forget, that the very obstacles which stood in their way, are by some means or other removed; so as to give place to the improvement. This applies in our present case. I have every impediment to remove, and every obscurity to make bright ; else I am exposed to the censure of those who think they could have far exceeded my attempt.*

* Camden tells us, that Geffry of Monmouth says, "It was built by one Molmutius;" but from the name ending with *tius*, it appears he must be some Roman, for many persons of distinction amongst the Romans ended their names with *us*, which will plainly appear by consulting the history of Rome. Mr. Crowther's history of Rome, tells of one *Mutius*, a valiant Roman youth, who lived in Tarquin's days, see page 367 ; and if we can suppose Mol was added, as a dignity to his name and family, then we may conclude it was he, or some of his successors, who built Trowbridge, for I do not find another such a name

Description & Situation.

Trowbridge by historians has been described as situated on a hill. It is admitted that it is situated on a declivity ; but it is not worthy the name of an hill, as the elevation from Town Bridge to Bellfield House, the residence of the late E. H. Mortimer, esq. is not more than thirty feet, though the distance is about half a mile, viz. from east to west : but tis not so wide from north to south, notwithstanding a new street, called Timbrell-street, is just begun. Therefore those historians who say it is built on a hill, must take it from report, and not observation. Some of the antient writers say, with a degree of propriety, that it stands on the noted vale of White Horse.* This vale begins near Farringdon, Berks, and continues to Warminster. Although this vale is now circumscribed within a small space of land, under the hill where the White Horse is formed, viz. between Abington and

in the whole history of Rome. I know it is a common contention amongst the natives of countries, kingdoms, and states, to contend, and sometimes fight and destroy each other, about their priority. But I have thought the following fact would save this dispute. Between Trowbridge and Bradford there used to be a foot way from one town to the other, and this path entered Trowbridge parish by crossing the Biss, at the extremity of the glebe ; this was called the Pew Bridge ; and the path brought the traveller exactly to the old church. The rector was bound by custom to keep it in repair. Now if we can suppose that this was done to accommodate the religious visitors of Bradford, when they come to Trowbridge church ; then we must conclude or infer that Trowbridge was the most antient town. Perhaps some may be ready to confirm the conjecture, from the Bridge being called a Pew, from being provided by the church, the same as an inclosed seat in the church. I intend to leave my readers to settle it. The road is still to be traced out, though it has been obstructed and turned, by one mean and another.

* The Horse is formed on so large a scale as to occupy an acre of ground ; and on whatever occasion it was cut, the annual cleaning it is attended with a kind of festivity for that day.

Farringdon ; yet there is a continuation of the vale, under or between a variety of hills, from the two extremities : and though no historian has noted its foundation, yet it is evident that Trowbridge has been a royalty for many centuries past. It is natural to ask, How this is to be proved ? This is easily proved from history and confirmed by tradition.*

It is a fact that the town retains the name of The Town and Liberty of Trowbridge. Now Trowbridge not being a borough, nor body corporate, it is consequently deficient of record. But it was a tradition, handed down from ages back, that John of Gaunt, as proprietor of it, (father to king Henry the 4th) gave it a privilege, that no one of Trowbridge should be obliged to serve on county juries. But after the fall of the house of Lancaster, in the death of Richard the Third, and consequently the interest of its adherents, and its immunities decaying with it ; the inhabitants of Trowbridge found their privilege or liberty a great obstruction to them, when they had causes in the county courts : consequently they were compelled to dispense with their privilege, to obtain a share of justice, as subjects of the realm ; and suffered themselves to be summoned by the hundred of Melksham, to serve on county juries, which have fixed them under the controul of the hundred of Melksham.

* Some of my readers may object to the using of the word tradition. Why not omit the word ? or, assert it as a fact ? To this I answer, that many writers assert things from hearsay, or, what is worse, from authors who commit that to print which is not founded on the least particle of truth, which is the basis on which facts are built. Some times travellers write things of distant countries, which others say are not to be found : and, therefore, a fact established upon a known tradition, where no written document is to be produced to the contrary, is much more to be depended upon, and more credit to an author, than transcribed from authors who write at random.

The whole parish includes the tithings of Staverton, (where is a small church, supplied by the minister of Trowbridge church) Studley, and Little Troule; and in these tithings the adjacent hamlets are contained.

The whole parish, including the three tithings, is about two thousand two hundred acres. The major part of which is meadow and pasture land, and the greatest part is freehold, belonging to the gentlemen of the town. The principle or largest landed property in the parish, is the estate of the late E. H. Mortimer, esq. whose family, like many others of the town, cannot trace their ancestors more than about four generations back, viz., as natives. Though we find a Radulphus (suppose Randolph) de Mortimer, in Doomsday Book. From its being said de Mortimer, it is evidently a French family, who, perhaps, accompanied the Conqueror into England: and to shew him as a Wiltshire freeholder, we find, besides possessing many detached pieces of land, he held the manors of Hullavington, Tockinham, Bratton, Hewish, Clatford, Imber, Sherrington, Chadington, Aldrington, or Alderton, and Luckington. I do not intend to prove this family of the Mortimers of Trowbridge, to be the descendants of the above Radulphus de Mortimer: this I leave to some more learned historians. But it can be proved that a Mortimer, earl of March, married the Queen Dowager of England. And a Mortimer was Earl of Oxford and Mortimer; but whether that family became extinct or not; suffice it to say, that these Mortimers do now exist at Trowbridge, in Wilts, and have been in the commission of the peace in Trowbridge, a century or more: This I can prove. And when any one can prove they are not collateral descendants of Radulphus de Mortimer, I am ready to yield it to my superior historian. However, it is a known fact, as noted already, that few families can prove themselves older, as inhabitants of Trowbridge, than the above:

though the Selfe's were very antient and numerous, about a centenary ago. But the most noted family, or case of antiquity of a family, is in the Harford's. This family lived at Studley, about the year 1650, and it is very remarkable, that the house have not changed the name of its occupier and proprietor, nor their occupation exploded, from that time to the present. But of the family of Selfe, it now concentres in one person, viz. J. Selfe, esq. So from a picture in the hands of Mr. J. Dowding, in which the Dowding's are traced back many generations, yea centuries ; and it appears they are collateral branches of many noble families : and, perhaps, if records were kept, there might be many more instances of a similar nature. However, I trust I shall not offend my readers by saying, we all sprang from the same common parent; and whatever distinction there may be between us now, when we return to the house appointed for all living, then names and families will cease.* Then we may say,

“ Beggars with awful ashes sport,
“ And tread the Cæsars in the dirt.”

It would be well for us all, let our rank in life be ever so great and honorable, to remember the saying of a French nobleman and courtier. When on his sick bed, he was waited upon by some great

* Though the town has got exceptions in the characters of its inhabitants, yet there seems a greatness and dignity of mind in them, especially when called to acts of generosity. And their benevolent actions (when compared to the neighbouring towns) stand high in reputation; and their forming (as a Branch Society) part of the British and Foreign Bible Society, will prove this at the first meeting. For while a neighbouring town, possessing large and opulent inhabitants, with her six out-parishes, &c. &c. only gave, as a donation, including her annual subscription, the small sum of about £60, Trowbridge's subscriptions and donations amounted to upwards of £194. This remark is taken from the report, published 1813, by the said Society,

person, to inform him that his royal friend the King had bestowed some new title and dignity upon him. He very calmly replied, I am much obliged to his Majesty for his kindness toward me on all occasions; and to you, for being the messenger of it, &c. These things are accounted great and valuable here; but where I am going, titles, honours, and distinctions are of no account: they are not known there.

The Castle.

Whether the Castle was built in Stephen's reign, or before, the sequel may be left to the judgment of the reader. It is evident, from a painting of it, that it was at once a piece of grandeur, and yet a well fortified defence. It stood in the court, on an hill constructed by art. It was composed of seven towers, four of which were standing about 1660 or 70. I knew the men who remembered them: and Mr. Jonathan Renolds, who died aged ninety, used to shew the tree which stood at the foot of the drawbridge, of which there were two; one to the church, near Court-lane, by which they went under a corresponding arch, which is now in the house of Mr. James Bird, to the old church. The other drawbridge was westward. Now if we admit that the person represented in the above painting be, as some say, the Empress Maud flying before King Stephen, then the Castle was built before that reign; and being a royal palace, each of the competitors for the kingdom struggled for it, as the right of the crown.*

* History informs us that the number of castles built or fortified by King Stephen, were one thousand. But if it were ever used as a residence for the court, it might be perhaps for

The ditch and ramparts are visible southward; but the other parts of the moat or ditch are filled. It extended northward to the south-side of Fore-street; and the present common sewer, which separated the castle-yard from the town, was the north boundary. For the street, from the corner of Court-lane to Mr. Naish's, now Messrs. Yearsly and Co.'s Factory, as it is called, will shew it to be so: for the two sides of the street are concave and convex, according to castle-yards in general. And the road used now up Fore-street as turnpike, was the Castle ditch; and the depth, at Wicker-hill, was, about

some branches of the Royal Family of the House of Lancaster: for Lincoln castle was the constant residence. And if it can be proved that Stephen built it, he being crowned in 1135. The Conqueror died in 1087. So that if it was not built till Stephen's reign, it was only about 50 years after the conquest; for if we calculate on its being destroyed in the civil wars about 1640 or 50, and built as above, it was only 500 years, which is no wonderful length of time: for Windsor castle has been built nearly as many years. But Camden puts us out of all doubt as to the time of building it, for, he says, that in 1152, the castle held out bravely against young Henry (Maud's son,) but was taken by him. By this and other successes, he brought King Stephen to adopt him for his heir to the crown. Though the town is not so very noted, for want of better acquaintance with its dignity, I think I may challenge the county, if not the kingdom, for a singular and unnoticed dignity it hath bestowed upon it, viz. the town, as it is recorded in this book, gives a peerage to the Dukes of Somerset. The River, hereafter named, gave the same dignity to Lord Willoughby de Brooke. But I think the title is now changed into the Grevil family.

The above note about Henry and Stephen quite establishes the tradition which a gentleman informed me of, viz.: The Empress Maud was forced to yield up the castle to Stephen, and then he held it all the time. Maud continued in England after she had surrendered it, until young Henry had resolved and collected his forces in France, &c. This must have been several years; consequently the castle must have been a royal residence to perhaps many sovereigns, besides those whom historians notice. See note on the Earl of Clarendon, page 10.

ninety years since, twelve feet or upwards; and many persons can remember when it was from three to four feet deep: and being fenced with wicker works against the ditch, gave it the name of Wicker-hill. The road up the town, was evidently direct from the bridge, else it could not be built opposite the road: besides, the building on the north side of the parade, is built nearly on and on the same range of the street as it was while the castle was in its prime, and the old church standing: for if we were to take a direction from the bridge up *by these houses*, (*cutting off Mr. Salter's rank of building*), along by the house, once Grant's, to the place commonly called Parsonage Corner, near to which the old church stood, we shall find the bridge was built to go direct to the old church; and the north side of Fore-street, from S. Bythesea, esq. to the new church, as far as Mr. Bird's, is a new erection, since the new church was built: so that the south side of Fore-street, from (if not including) Court-lane, to the Factory-house before-mentioned, was all on the Castle-yard. The depth must have been very great at the upper end, as the whole ditch or moat, communicated with the river, so as to maintain the fortification, in conjunction with the ramparts. And if we could see the Castle-gate now standing, it would be no wonder if, like the Castle at Lincoln, we could see the arms of John of Gaunt, cut out over the entry.*

* Lincoln Castle was a Windsor to the house of Lancaster; while it remained, it was a palace to that house.

In its prime, Trowbridge Castle must have been very formidable, not only in its great bulk, but in its surrounding fortifications. The southern ditch, called Little Hill, formed the glacis and bastions; and, I suppose, from the bottom of the moat to the top of the glacis must be (when in use) fourteen or fifteen feet, and then taking the surface of the water when at its height, thirty feet in width, and then viewing the castle as a level on the top of the hill whereon it stood, it must look at

It appears indisputable that the Duke of Lancaster took particular notice of the town, *not only as noted before*, but by his being the means (by Catharine Swinford) of giving birth to the noble family of the Dukes of Somerset, who are Barons of Trowbridge, and this makes it appear the more evident, that the royal giver of that peerage, could not confer a more renowned dignity on the man whom he delighted to honour, than to make him Baron of Trowbridge !

Whether the union between Henry the Eighth and his beloved Jane Seymour, returned the manor of Trowbridge to the King, or her by the said union ; it was in effect concentrated in the crown, from whence it came, for it became a royal domain again ; but from which it departed by the death of King Edward the Sixth. From that time it devolved to the Duke of Somerset, and then to his daughters, he having no son, until it concentrated in the Rutland family, who sold it to Thomas Timbrell, esq. the present Lord. And a very respectable gentleman of Trowbridge lately told me, that his ancestors used to tell him, that the fields, called the Courts, were not named so as being contiguous to the castle ; but it was on account of its being the royal residence, and the court being kept in the Castle : however, let that be as it may, the Court for the Dutchy of Lancaster, has been kept at Trowbridge, till long since the memory of many of the inhabitants.*

once noble, beautiful, and safe. And, I suppose, if only an equal piece of building, with its appendages, could be viewed, it would excite admiration in the beholder.

* Memorandum, extracted from Clarendon, dated 26th March, 1752. About 150 years ago, lived in Trowbridge, Wilts, a clothier, whose name was Thomas Langford, two of whose descendants, within 100 years after, came to possess the crown of these kingdoms, in their own right. He was, according to the days in which he lived, when clothiers were very affluent, possessed of great riches, but had no son ; but married one of his daughters

Having given my readers a short view of the suburbs of the Castle, I now come to its foundations. The hill on which it stands, has been opened or explored at two different periods, in my memory: one was by opening the central part of the hill, in several places, and the butments and walls were very visible; but the cement, which was used as mortar, though it had laid underground so many centuries, was declared by the workmen to be much harder than the stone itself; consequently it would not pay for taking out: nor was there any appearance of deposited wealth discovered. However, this only quieted the minds of the owners a little time; for within twenty years, a large cut was made on the west side to discover some of the deposited riches. But this was sooner given over than the former, and with as little reward. It is very seldom a building of such magnitude is raised and destroyed, without some account of one or both these notable epochs being recorded. But thus it is here: A castle was built,

to a Mr. Hyde, a gentleman in the south part of Wiltshire, viz. Clarendon Park, near Salisbury, by whom he (Mr. Hyde) had a son, and this son was born at Mr. Langford's house, at Trowbridge. This son was the renowned Earl of Clarendon, whose daughter was married to the Duke of York, afterwards King James the Second. Consequently Queen Ann and Queen Mary were from Trowbridge extraction, the history adds. This account I lately had of Mr. Robert Houlton, who resides in the very house where the noble Lord was born, which he purchased with many others from the said Mr. Hyde, the father of Lord Carendou, in 1641. The houses are now the property of Mr. E. Salter, one only excepted; and that part where Lord Clarendon was born, is occupied by a Mrs. Martin, mother to Colonel Martin. This is another addition to the dignity of Trowbridge; and accounts, as is noted, for its loyalty on every occasion.

The above note was published in the monthly magazine, for August, 1814; and being taken from the MSS of the late Rev. W. Woldron, of Trowbridge, who was so renowned for his veracity, that his word was more as a confirmation than many persons oaths are accounted, removes every doubt of its truth.

did exist, perhaps many centuries, and was destroyed,* without a record of it. This is a striking representation of human glory. A great man lived, died, and was buried, and is forgotten.

The River.

This Castle was defended, in a great measure, by being surrounded or environed by the river Biss. To accomplish which, a fine canal was cut, from a half-a-mile distance, and the river brought so as to form a fine concave to the castle; which answered a double end, as being an ornament to the prospect from the castle, and as an addition to its fortification. And a mill was constructed by its return to the bosom of its mother, which was in the castle-yard; so that the garrison was not soon starved out for flour. And to prevent any surprize, by false pretences on the town side, the road from the town to the mill was up the stream, from the factory's corner, under the castle wall to the mill tail. This could not be exceeded by a fortification to a frontier city or garrison. Here likewise was a supply of fish, brought to the court or garrison, both as a luxury and supply, in case of a siege. Though you may say there is no supply of fish in the Biss, but you are to remember that the drag or casting net was not suffered to rob it daily, for one gentleman's table and another; its fish were preserved for the use of the castle. It is acknowledged that the produce of it is not of a very extraordinary kind, being only roach, dace, gudgeon,

* The cannon used to demolish the castle, was planted on West Ashton hill. This place was not only fitest, as being the nearest eminence to it; but the front of the castle was nearly directly opposite to it.

ions, and eels ; except now and then a straggler from the fish ponds of R. Long, esq. M. P. ; or Abraham Ludlow's, esq. Heywood, from which is found a carp or tench. These ponds empty themselves into the Biss.

The Biss begins at Biss-bottom, near Upton Scuddamore, and runs through a chalky bed, till it enters North Bradly, where it enters a muddy passage or bed, and runs by the west border of the noted Ashton common, and enters Trowbridge parish at the south side. But this muddy bed on which it runs and rests, and by which, in conjunction with its being stagnated by mills, &c. the more excellent sort of fish are prevented from living in it, is amply made good to the town, and clothiers in particular, by being so much the softer, on account of not running on a gravel ; and almost incomparable for cleansing the wool, as well as the cloth.

This quality in the water produces gold fish to the clothiers. Some of the produce of the Biss is turned into fine estates and funded property, far exceeding the produce of the best trout stream in the county. But I hope my readers will not think me too prolix, while I detain them in relating another property of the Biss. It was a long and well-known tradition, and received with belief, that no water was calculated to the use of piece dying, like the Stroud-water, Gloucestershire : and it is a fact, that the cloth sent to Stroud for dying, has not been returned for three or four months. But besides several others, a dyehouse is erected a little to the west side of the castle moat, or rather at the foot of the foundation, where piece dying is now done equal to, and in some colours it exceeds Stroud-water dying.* After being so great an accommodation to the town,

* While my sheets are in the press, nearly the whole of the upper courts, which were contiguous to the castle, are sold to erect factories upon them, and to have the use of the Biss, at eighteen pence per square foot.



the Biss verges away westward to the real Troule bridge, then turns northward, and pours its profitable stream, together with its finny productions, into the Avon, at the northern extremity of the parish.*

The Bridge, as hinted before, was not built without consideration : and if any thing caused it to be called Troule Bridge, it must be on a supposition that the bridge was built to accommodate the mansion-house of Walwaynard, as well as the town, who was proprietor or lord of Little Troule, and used to hold court there, under the name of Walwaynard's court, by which the farm is now called ; and before the inclosing the lands, the bridge was nearly direct to Troule, or the mansion house. But I again say, though I pay due deference to such renowned men as Camden and Leland, the hide of land, mentioned in doomsday book, which is denominated Troule,

* Camden calls this river, The Wear. But I must give him credit for his error, as not being wilful. For had he, like Bruce, went to the spring head of it, he would have seen his error. For his river Wear rises near Westbury, and is really a wear. But the Biss has its source from its name, Biss, bottom ; and runs several miles before the wear falls into it. But some have attempted to obviate this argument by saying, the river obtains the name of Biss from running by a few houses called Biss. This is a very weak and superficial inference, for a thousand instances might be advanced to prove that rivers give names to places, and not places to rivers. The place where it has its source is called, from its being between two little hills, viz. Biss Bottom. And where it empties itself into the Avon, it is called Biss Mouth. And Mr. Camden's map of Wilts, discovers this error, viz. he very nicely points out the source of the Biss, and points out very exactly the little stream at Heywood, but omits the wear entirely, which ought to have appeared a little above Westbury Leigh. For every child, for miles round, can shew you the wear, or, as they call it, Well-head. This is not the only error of the kind. For in attempting to prove the Thames or Tems, to be in Wiltshire, he proves it, by a charter granted to the abbot of Malmesbury : and to support his idea, mentions Summerford to prove it. But Summerford is on the river Avon, not much short of twenty miles from the Thames.

could not be Trowbridge, but simply Little Troule, afterwards Walwaynard manor.

Having remarked the bridge, I cannot avoid noticing one thing, though a little out of its place. The old bridge was very narrow, like other old bridges, and it had an angle over the centre, on the south side, for persons to step into, in case of danger from cattle or carriages, or to stand and enjoy the sport of angling unmolested : but near the bridge there was a singular execution, viz. a ducking stool was erected between two posts, with pins chained to it, to let it down, &c. according as the delinquent's crime called for it, if it were only for scolding or fighting, &c. ; if she was game, as the executioners called it, she suffered slightly ; but if for a capital offence, viz. being a common prostitute, especially with a married man, Woe be to her ! for in those days that crime was held in detestation by all ranks in society, although the town was more in its uncivilized state than since, and though a magistrate was not but here and there. This executioner kept such characters more in awe, than both magistrates can now do, notwithstanding they are very active in punishing them : their appearances also shew that they are too much encouraged by persons who are not of the lower classes in society only. So we see that notwithstanding there might not be a magistrate in the town, every one could not do what he pleased.

The Church.

I now come, of course, to the Church, and I can say of a truth, it is not of the first magnitude. But it is a plain neat building ; the centre of it has a very curious workmanship painted on its ceiling, which is nearly fifty feet from or above the floor ; it has a

very good organ in it, and a few monuments of the Brewers, who were once very respectable here, and in commission of the peace, and at Haywood house : He died in 1707. Watts, Houlton, Yearburys, Shrapnal, Davis, &c. shew that this town was their native places.

But what is most curious, is a deed made by a Sir James Troumbre, of Trowbridge, merchant, who built the alms-house, which is lately pulled down, dated January the 11th, 1483, by which he ordered his feoffees to pay, out of his estates in Trowbridge, Studley, BroughtonGifford, and NorthBradley, Wilts, and Beckington, in the county of Somerset, that the said feoffees therein named, with the churchwardens, should elect and choose, immediately after his death, a priest, and pay him a certain yearly salary of ten marks, to say and sing divine service, at the altar in the new church, called Jesu's altar, before the tomb of Joan his wife, and pray for him, and other founders of the mass, and for the souls of all other benefactors. (Here follows a large number of dignified and respectable names ; which were to be comprised in a tablet, hanging at the said high altar.) And also by the same deed, he enjoins that six poor men or women of the alms-house, by him newly built, should have separate apartments in it, and three shillings and four pence quarterly ; and that they should assemble in the said alms-house twice a day, and in a loud voice pray for his soul, and the souls of Joan and Alice, his wives, there interred.*

The Church is dedicated to St. James, perhaps not only as a respect to that saint, but because the great donor above mentioned was named James.† And I

* There is a monument in Macclesfield church, dated 1489 and 1505, wherein the deceased, petitions the beholder to pray for the souls of Roger Leigh and Elizabeth his wife,

† The superstition and falseness of the Popish religion, was never more exemplified and imbibed by its votaries, than between

am persuaded there can be no doubt but the church was built about this time, by those very benefactors as named in the said deed.*

The foregoing account of the many dignified names, whose heirs are possessed of additional honours, prove three things. First, it proves the antient dignity of its inhabitants and proprietors. Secondly, It shews what the town, with all its boasted greatness, which is much, has cost its dignified characters, and proves, beyond a doubt, what I have often remarked, viz. that families are almost continually removing and changing, at least every century, or nearly so. But thirdly, by it we learn the age when this noble structure — the church, was built. The above deed and mode of expression used by the testator, shew, that he could not intend the alms-house benefactors. For it would be absurd to suppose, in that age of Popish superstition, that so many great men subscribed to so small a donation as an alms-house. Therefore the benefactors must mean to the church, which is called the New Church. Besides, I have heard it told from my childhood, fifty years before I heard of the above deed, that Trowbridge church was built when labour was at one penny per day, and wheat at one penny per bushel. Now to prove this age to be the time of the prices of both labour and wheat, history informs us that

the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; for besides Trowbridge and Macclesfield, monuments for offering prayers for the dead, and records of meritorious works, to obtain heaven; and pardons being sent from Rome for 26,000 years and 26 days, for doing some notable act for the infallible church.

*The principal endowments in Trowbridge, are an alms-house for six widow women; and a free school for forty boys, which is now encreased to a very large number, by voluntary subscription, where they are taught arithmetic, and every useful branch of learning, so as to fit them for tradesmen.

two bridges were built at Abingdon, Berks, in 1416, at the wages, even though the country was searched for the best of workmen, at one penny per day, and wheat was one shilling per quarter. The labour exactly answers to the above tradition, and the wheat but little difference, which 20 years in time, or 60 miles distance, might make. Consequently the church might have been built about the fifteenth century.*

But to return. The grandeur, neatness, and beauty of the spire, which is only about 130 feet in height, is scarcely equalled for its beauty, when its loftiness is considered. Indeed the whole edifice, especially when the figures of wild beasts, and other animals, adorned its battlements, was very ornamental. For when I used to view them in or after a storm of rain, they appeared as though they were disgorging themselves, the water from the roof coming out of their mouths. But the rude hand of time, and the various bidders which have been placed by workmen, under the name of real or pretended repairs, have left very

* The living or rectory is not sold, but still remains in the gift of the Duke of Rutland. It is only a small benefice, perhaps producing only seven or eight hundred per annum. But here I have a call to record an event worth noticing, viz. The succeeding rector to the late Dr. Kins, dean of Sarum, found that there was much building erected on the lands belonging to the rectory, and he wanted a large mansion to live in; consequently he laid claim to all the building, and wanted the owners, instead of paying him a ground rent as before, to former rectors, to purchase the building at its value, and so alienate part of the living, by making it private property. And to add to his living from another quarter, he attempted to advance the tithes of Staverton, from a modus to a tithe per acre, like the other parts of the parish. But to this the landholders appealed, and determined to stand trial. And at length, when the rector found that the ecclesiastical authority could, nor would admit of his selling any part of the rectory, nor the landholders advance the modus on Staverton tithing, he gave up the benefice. He is succeeded by the Rev. Crabb, D. D. who took possession of the living in 1814, and appears to be a very moderate and peaceable clergyman.

few of them whole. For the town has too often had the misfortune to appoint men for churchwardens who have expended, either wantonly or for self interest, large and almost incredible sums, in repairing the building. But the spire has stood the test; and I myself would not have it decay, and let fall down, through neglect. But if a churchwarden was put into office, who was belonging to the handicraft trade, especially if he were more lavish of his power and the parish money than some of the former ones, down would come the glory of our ancestors, and I fear it would never be raised again in its antient dignity.

But it is not a little remarkable that when the church was built, the cross, which stood in the market place, a little above the opposite to the door of the George Inn, was standing till about 1784, when it was taken down by consent, being too unfashionable, and a nuisance to the market place.* I have known it used as a butter market. The cross resembled that at Salisbury, which is used for the same purpose. But for what end crosses were built, I leave greater historians to determine. It is said a King Henry set up crosses at every place where the corpse of his Queen Elenor was rested, in the way to interment. But one thing we cannot pass, viz.: When the church and cross were built, there were three stones, made of the same dimensions each, for a certain purpose: one was placed on the steeple,

* There used to be a range of stalls from the church road, viz. Mr. Watton's house, down a considerable way on the north side of Fore-street. I suppose they were made for different branches of trade. Several were in use so late as the year 1750. Whether they belonged to the houses against which they were placed, I cannot determine. But the houses being built according to antient custom, viz. the timber of each story projecting out over the lower or under one, left a space of ground in front, or at the area. The last of these vacuums was filled, by the building of Mr. Mauris's house.

as the top or crowning stone : another on the south side of the cross : and the third near the top of pole barn cone, between three roads, viz. East Gate-street, erroneously called Hilperton-lane, and Low Mead-street, now called, from the stone Round Stone-street. These stones were in diameter four feet ; for the antient inhabitants called them the width of a cart-wheel ; and about two feet thick. And if we look at that on the steeple, and consider its heighth, we cannot think it less.*

The town is not large but populous,† From a survey made, by order of government, in May, 1811, it contained about 1000 houses, exclusive of the hamlets. Males in the parish, 2615. Females, 3460. But when we consider that 100 superfine broad cloths, and 600 cassimeres, are made weekly, we shall not wonder to learn that many hundreds of persons are employed, who live in the surrounding villages : and not so few as 200, from Milksham and its neighbourhood, are employed by one house in

* The streets are not many ; but as they may increase in number, I have thought well to name them, for the use of posterity. Fore-street and Back-street are the principal thoroughfares, from east to west. Hill-street and Silver-street are as union streets to the former two. Low-mead-street, called Roundstone-street, leads to Eastgate-street, called Hilpertou-lane, Duke-street is so called, in commemoration of John Gaunt, duke of Lancaster ; Yerbury-street is in the south-side of Eastgate-street ; Court-lane leads to the courts. The coneger is several small streets, called Ranks. The appendages to the town are Blington, Brick Plat, Adcroft-lane, Polebarn-lane, or rather South-street, Stallards, Newtown, and Troule-lane.

† The large piece of antique architecture, called Wick-house, near Trowbridge; now belonging to the opulent family of Bythesea, with Monkton-house, Brooke-house, now pulled down, and four others of the same descripton, which were nearly situated in this neigboushood, was, according to tradition, as told about a century since, the property of seven brothers, who at once possessed and occupied the seven venerable piles.

Trowbridge;* and notwithstanding the many acres of land which Mr. Timbrel has permitted to be converted into gardens, it is almost incredible to say; there are at least twenty loads of vegetables brought weekly, from Devizes, Warminster, Westbury, Lavington, Seend, Hinton, Ashton, Bratton, and many other places, to supply the vast influx of its inhabitants, &c. And the town, as a manufacturing town, is, to its inhabitants and neighbourhood, like a navigable river, which at once employs, fertilizes, and fructifies wherever it passes. So is the vast sum which is paid by the manufacturers to the workmen, distributed to every town and village from which it receives supplies of provisions: for in this point of view, if I may use the expression, there is a kind of reciprocal renumeration on both sides, between the town and its surrounding neighbourhood. And besides the circulation of the wages being beneficial to its vicinity, there is one benefit which accrues to it, from a source which cannot be too well noticed, viz. the market and its constant attendant, the soil or manure, which is produced from it, and the streets is an excellent healer and improver of poor lands. I have known two estates in the parish, one north and the other south, which were so poor no one could live upon them; but by putting a quantity of the manure, as above noted, they are accounted amongst the rich lands of the parish.

The supply of meat is not of the first rate for largeness, but for its flavour and fatness of its size, cannot be exceeded. This proves the richness of the pasture on the banks of the Avon and Biss, which

* Nearly the whole labouring part of the large parish of North Bradley, are dependant on Trowbridge for employ; and some of them have made considerable fortunes by this lawful employ of kerseymere weaving; and others, comfortable subsistence.

have been very noted for ages. And amongst the numerous instances, I beg leave to mention one. A piece of pasture land, in the parish of North Bradley, called Barnfield, the property of J. Whittaker, esq. of Fairwood, was so renowned in Smithfield market, in the former part of the last century, that the naming of Barnfield grazing, produced immediate sale, until, like other impositions, it was detected: for it had grown to such an heighth of esteem, that all the cattle from the neighbourhood was sold as Barnfield grazing.*

I come now to the trade only. And first I observe, that there are only three names in the town who have continued as clothiers, who were of that branch seventy years ago. But at that period, when wool was from two to two shillings and six pence per pound, it was thought surprising for a clothier to buy twenty bags at one purchase. But now, and for some years past, it is common for a certain house, well known in the woollen market, to buy two or three hundred bags in one purchase, at ready money.*

* As it is very likely that some person may read this little history at some very distant period of time. I hereby give some account of the price of provision in March, 1814.

Bread, the quartern loaf, one shilling.

Beef and Mutton per pound, from nine to eleven pence.

Potatoes per peck, from six to seven pence.

Pork at one shilling per pound; and fat pigs seventeen shillings per score.

Butter sixteen to eighteen pence per pound.

* Perhaps some may conceive I have exceeded the bounds of moderation, in hinting the riches which have been gained by the clothing trade. But Mr. Camden exceeds all this: for he tells of a clothier, named Abbot, who had three sons; one was arch-bishop of Canterbury, another bishop of Salisbury, and the third, Sir Maurice Abbot, was lord mayor of London, all in office together.

To say at what early period the woollen trade began in Trowbridge is not an easy task ; but it is natural to conclude that, when John Kempe came over from the continent, and introduced weaving woollen cloth, about 1330, and the king immediately inviting over every other branch of manufacturers, it is very easy to suppose that he soon thought of Trowbridge, as being his royal domain, and introduced some of the workmen to teach them as soon as possible. And I can only bring one argument, and I think not a weak one, to support the supposition, viz. The Dutch reel, as used in Holland, was always used in Trowbridge only, notwithstanding the struggles and efforts of the clothiers to set it aside, though every other clothing town used the English reel : the Dutch reel was never given up here, till spinning by hand ceased. Therefore it is natural to suppose that it was introduced with the trade from Flanders.

It is natural to enquire from whence such a large quantity of ready cash, as is required to pay for the manufacturing such a large quantity of goods, as has been stated, could be obtained. When it was wanted faster than could be procured in the country, various means were used to get it down from London, sometimes in boxes, &c. and sometimes even in the bags of wool. And on the establishing the bank at Devizes, that became a means. Another resource was from the collectors of the county taxes, and the excise, &c. But at length the trade, like the Nile, overflowed all its banks ! for every resource came short of the demand, or the risque in sending abroad was too great for the trade to run. However, this great obstruction is removed by the establishment of a bank of the first rate respectability, under the firm of Ludlow, Barton, Timbrell, and Timbrell.

The fair is held on St. James's day, the fifth of August, and sometimes three following days, mostly

for toys and trifling commodities, though the cheese fair is much increased of late years. It being neither a corporation nor borough, it has no public feasts, except the county vension feast, once in two years; but herein the town has lost some of its antient dignity, if dignity attaches to festivity. For every cause produces its effect. This will appear by the following record: Royalty in Trowbridge has produced loyalty; or, in other words, the town being a royalty was, I believe, a great cause of its antient loyalty. This attracted the notice of the neighbouring inhabitants, especially amongst the rich and great, and amongst others, the noble Lord Viscount Weymouth, as a token of respect to the town, made them an annual present of a fat buck, and to grace the table, his lordship honored the company with his presence. Sir Edward Baynton, and many other honorable characters, made it a point to meet his lordship, with the town gentlemen and tradesmen. Here the grievances of the trade or taxes were coolly and deliberately discussed; and if it were thought advisable to address the throne or parliament, the town's gentlemen, &c. got it prepared by the time the parliament met, and the noble lord generally condescended to be the bearer of it. And here it is remarkable that amongst the gentlemen or tradesmen of the town, the greatest harmony subsisted; and frequently twenty or thirty clothiers of the town were amongst the company. And now peace is established, and if the war taxes should be taken off, we might hope that the noble Marquis of Bath would follow the above example of his ancestors, when we should see his family coach, and six bright bay horses bring him in state up the town.

Though the town is renowned for trade, it cannot boast of first rate professional gentlemen. Physicians generally reside in more genteel towns or cities:

for though a tradesman may be very rich, yet as a tradesman he is not ranked in society with gentlemen.* Yet the town can boast of a Mrs. Jane Hanny, who was the inventor and proprietor of the renowned Trowbridge Female Pills, now prepared by her grand daughter, Mrs. Ludlow, of Warminster. Another thing it can boast of, in the present labouring part of society, that though there are exceptions to many rules, yet the labouring poor are very industrious, and appear sabbath days more like tradesmen, than servants. This is a credit to their employers as well as a comfort to themselves ; and shews great improvement since the writing of a book by the late William Temple, esq. dated 1738, wherein he represents the houses filthy, destitute of goods and clothing, and, in a word, drunkenness and its concomitant wretchedness, reigning without controul.† He states the population at 3000. How

* The town has, in the last century, to record the name of a British admiral being a native of it, viz. in the late admiral Houlton, who obtained the rank of post captain 1752, and who never disgraced the British flag by turning his back upon his enemy.

+ To support my remark respecting the improvement the town has made in its morals. In some, vices will appear, by the following character of it, viz. In the beginning of the last century, sheep stealers, horse stealers, coiners of money, &c. with every other vice, was so attached to the town, that it became a proverb to say, If no one of Trowbridge was capitally convicted at the assizes for the county, it was a maiden assize. But there has not been an instance of a native of Trowbridge being executed for the last fifty years, though I do not pretend to say none of them have merited such a death. But while I am noting that the natives of Trowbridge have not been degraded by capital punishments, I have to sound the awful alarm of a most daring act of depravity, joined with as brutish ferocious disposition, that can be produced in the annals of history. A young soldier, of the 89th regiment of foot, quartered at our barracks, was straggling in the fields, where a foot path leads from Upper Studley toward Trowbridge, (the whole

many children are to be drawn from that number, I leave others to determine. But he says, The excise books received duty on 2000 hogsheads of beer annually, besides 30 or 40 gin houses. I myself cannot form a judgment on this, but I should think the present 6000 inhabitants ; and all the great brewery of Messrs. Watten and Timbrel's book accounts, to their various public houses in Trowbridge, scarce amounts to that sum. So that we see there is five times the money circulated, and a vast quantity less of beer and spirits drank than in those days alluded to by Mr. Temple.

Though the buildings in the town are not regular as to form, yet there are many well built family houses, which, for neatness and architecture, cannot be exceeded even in Bath : and though there are exceptions in a few, yet the major part of them are occupied by new families, who have, from small

length between the two most distant dwellings do not exceed about half a mile, and in a very frequented public road) where he met a young female, about twelve years of age, going to school, perhaps a little before mid or noon day, whom he seized, and with all the daring outragiousness of the most hardened savage disposition of a veteran in wickedness, he, with threats of murder if she cried out, committed a crime of the utmost extent of brutish conquest, which could stain human nature, murder excepted, and got off, as he supposed, an unknown conqueror ; but the secret was not so to the Divine Being, whose providence often discloseth the most secret actions : and by the determined resolutions of the girls' very respectable friends, aided by a very scrutinizing magistrate, viz. Charles Bythesea, esq. his person was identified by the object of his brutality, and personal witness, from concurring evidence, brought home the guilt indisputably upon him, and in three days he was hurried to his deserved habitation, the gaol, and in four days more he was tried, and condemned for execution, at the lent assizes for 1814.

This awful instance of just punishment will, I hope, serve as a caution to all such evil minded persons, to abstain from such heinous crimes, which will bring them to the same shameful end.

properties, accumulated ample fortunes, while the builders of them are lost in name or reduced in circumstances.

The general picture of Trowbridge is drawn to life by the following record, from antient history. One of the kings of Egypt made it a rule to have his chariot drawn by four of his conquered sovereigns. But one day observing one of them to look very attentively at one of the wheels, the king asked the reason he so earnestly watched the motion of the wheel ; he very gravely said, I observe in the wheel that by its motion that part which is in the dust now soon changes situations with that part which is above. The king took the hint, and would never afterwards be drawn by his conquered sovereigns ; doubtless being persuaded, from the answer of his degraded enemy, that the same reverse of fortune might happen to him.*

Whether from situation or otherwise, so it was, that the town was honoured with a visit by his present Majesty, George the Third, where every token of respect was paid to the royal traveller : Looms were placed in the street at the Bridge end ; arches, &c. formed of cloth, was made, to shew its staple trade. His Majesty's carriage was met at the entering of the town by the gentlemen and tradesmen, who marched up the town, attended by a band of music, for which Trowbridge is noted ; for the Trowbridge band is often sent for, as being at once respectable for instruments and good players on them. A visit paid by such a traveller, drew a vast concourse of people from the surround-

* The saying of Seneca in his epistles, viz. That there was no king that was not extracted from slaves, nor any slave that descended not from a king, with a little alteration will apply to the inhabitants of Trowbridge ; for there are few rich families in the town but what came from poor extraction, and few poor ones but sprung from rich ancestors.

ing towns and villages, and while changing horses, &c. some of the gentlemen attempted to address his Majesty; but from the multitude of voices, and the singing of bells, and other demonstrations of joy, I cannot inform my readers of the substance of the address, it being only verbal, nor his Majesty's answer. However, this excited envy and jealousy in some of the gentlemen of the neighbouring town of Bradford, and they versified some of Trowbridge gentlemen, who in turn wrote a reply, as a retort; this produced as laughable a circumstance as could have been made by any Hibernian. Some time after there was, according to course, amongst the fashionable winter amusements, a ball at Bradford, and amongst the conversation, the verses and retort came up, and an officer of the army being present, wished to see the retort; the waiter, therefore, was ordered to ask his mistress for it. The man with all haste ran down stairs, and informed his mistress the gentleman wanted a *tart*! She replied there was none but broken ones in the house; but at length to accommodate the company, she sent to a gentleman's house, and procured one, and sent it up; and the company had more enjoyment, from the mistake, than the retort would have given: for with these instruments, things are generally so impregnated with bitters, that honey itself cannot make them palatable.

Leaving this digression to my juvenile and jocose readers, I proceed to the morning and evening bell. And it appears from history that bells have been used by the antient Egyptians; but the Turks prohibit the use of them, even amongst the christians. However, this instrument is very antient, and it is hard to determine exactly for what intent or to what purpose the use of them originated. But it is notorious enough that they are used on a variety of occasions. Lewis the 14th used the bell as a signal for the papists to begin the murder of the disarmed

and unsuspected Protestants in Paris. Sometimes they are used for warning and collecting the scattered inhabitants of a town, &c. to assist their neighbours in cases of fire, or as a signal to a town to put out their lights at a certain hour. Sometimes their sound is lively, as expressive of some signal joy ; and again, the knell is sounded to give notice of death.* However, I leave these flowing ideas, and come to what is the original design of the bell being used morning and evening almost in every town, and the variations as to the hours. Some have supposed it to be a Roman catholic custom, used for devotional purposes. Be that as it may, it is a known fact, they were very anciently used, and even a great way in the last century; especially before the making of turnpike roads, and where there were large downs, &c. contiguous, as a guide to travellers to and from markets. Thus the great bell at the cathedral of Wells was anciently tolled all night or nearly, on some occasions, as a guide to persons who had to come over Mendip to the city. And perhaps we cannot place the action to a more just or better purpose, than a guide to travellers, who had to go over large tracts of uninclosed land : and here I shall direct my readers to a tradition, yet evidently a fact. The ringing of Trowbridge bell happened once at the very juncture of time when a traveller had lost his way between Trowbridge and Hilperton, who immediately set up his staff on the spot where he was when the sound reached his ear, and by which means he found his way to the town; and went, when it was day, and found the staff, and purchased the piece of land,

* Bells were used in churches about 458 of the Christian era, They had a consecration appointed in 968; and were admitted to the great ordinance of Romish baptism in 1030, in East Goodwin's or Harold's reign.

and gave it to the use of ringing the bells for ever. Now some persons may be disposed to object to this because it is not on written records. So the deist rejects all revelation, because there are some things which are beyond his beclouded reason : but though men do not live for ever to declare facts as witnesses to the action itself, yet the Israelites could be satisfied from positive demonstration, that there were twelve stones in Gilgal, and that there was a red sea, and a great number of demonstrative evidences to prove what was written of these things. And so I say here, there is a piece of land, called bell land, at the eastern border of the parish, and it is exact in form like a bell. Now I have taken considerable pains to prove the thing to be a fact, which, I trust, will at once satisfy the candid, and prevent the caviller from racking his brain to find out a specious objection to the tradition, respecting bell land, and ringing the bell at four in the morning and eight at night, during the winter half year.

There is one thing more which I am resolved to rescue from being a tradition only, which is the Town Watch. And here it may be objected, like many other things, that some have never heard of it, whilst others scarcely believe it, being only hearsay, &c. But as I have really served on it many times, I can certify the truth of it, with perhaps fifty additional living testimonies, to succeeding generations. And before I attempt to explain its process as a watch, I intend to assign some probable grounds for the cause of it, and with all due deference to those who know more of fortifications which are contiguous to towns or cities than myself. I believe it is a known practice in such places for the town or city, in certain cases, to be under the command and controul of the commander of such fortifications ; and as this position cannot be denied, I venture to presume that this watch originated from the com-

mander of the castle. I have informed my reader already of the situation of the castle with the town, its ditch the town side, and the road from the town to the mill. Now under all these considerations, we will suppose a design was formed to surprize the castle from the town side, and a plan was formed by the insurgents to enter the town under some specious pretence, and by that means get into the castle. Now it is natural for a commander to be jealous of every possible means of defending his fortress; and in order to guard it from any assault from the town side, he makes the town's people, in some degree, responsible for the safety of the castle, by setting a watch: and if we admit this conjecture as a ground of the watch, the description of its process will evidence that the town watch must be of great antiquity. This watch was annually begun in the summer season, and it began at the eastern entrance of the town, viz. at the top house in Eastgate-street or Hilper-ton-lane; six householders, widows, &c. excepted, were warned each day, and if any one did not choose to serve, the bailiff who warned him, permitted him to provide a substitute. At eight o'clock they went to the house of the bailiff, and received a charge, viz. to keep watch and ward in the town till six in the morning, to take up all idle persons, vagrants, &c. and examine every one who passed the streets, especially strangers, and if they could not give account of their business to the satisfaction of the watchmen, especially to the constable of the night, who was generally the most respectable of the six watchmen, he was kept in custody till the morning. Their weapons were a kind of bill hooks fixed on poles, about five feet long, and were very formidable, but the constable's was doubly so. When the watch had regularly gone through the town, (the hamlets were exempted) as before described, it ceased for that year.

The Plague.

When the Plague raged in London in 1665, Trowbridge shared the common fate of country towns, &c. by being made a refuge to those who fled from the contagion; and to avoid the danger of the town's people taking the infection, a house was appointed for all strangers, commonly called a pest house, to be put into by way of quarantine. This house was well contrived for situation: it stood at the southern corner of Choksalls, a place where there was no road near it, and near the banks of the Biss. This was a well adjusted plan; for while they were provided with water, without help from uninfect ed society, the natural attraction and motion of the stream had a great tendency to carry off the effects of the disorder, if any remained. The ground which the house and garden occupied is to be seen; but the building was, doubtless, soon destroyed, for fear the house was infected.* But there is a distemper so attached to some persons, that pulling down the house would not cure them of it: it is well this is not found in every house.

The leet or court-leet is held at Easter, where the lord or his steward attends. Here the constables for the town are chosen, and the three tithingmen, viz. for Studley, Staverton, and Troule, and the Aleconner, Hayward, &c. This court, in some sense, preambulate to the different parts of the parish, where any nuisances are, they take cognizance of them, and present them to the court, who enjoin it on the persons who cause them to remove it, or suffer a fine: and after proper preparations, the court, at least as many as are not

The marriage register about this period will shew the calamities of the times: In 1644, only three marriages. In 1646, two. In 1647, two. In 1648, two. In 1651, one. And in 1672, three.

disabled in the war with Sir John B. and Bacchus, go down to the antient barn, once in the castle yard, and swear in the new officers, and then march back to the George Inn. However, I cannot pass this court without noticing its antient dignity, viz. the ancestors of the present Hervey, M. D. were tenants as lessees to the proprietor of the manor for a long series of years ; and at the exit of the said Mr. Hervey, a considerable portion of land, besides the courts, became freehold : this deed, as leaseholder to or under the lord of the manor, enjoined it on the lessee to provide entertainment for the lord and his retinue, together with stabling for the horses, to certain number, which shew that this lord's court was, in its primitive state, a very sumptuous one. And as a farther proof of regard toward the castle mill, it was enjoined on the tenant to send a certain sum of grain or wheat weekly, to be ground at the said mill. But I cannot conclude without making a very just remark on one thing of Trowbridge parish, viz.: For a great number of years, I have noticed the small quantity of timber growing on the estates in general, especially those estates more contiguous to the town ; and I have often made it my disinterested study to discover the real cause of it ; and I think the two following are the principal. On those estates which are leasehold, there were scarcely a tree in twenty or thirty acres. This must be owing to the lord living at a great distance, and the carelessness of the steward in not obliging the tenant to fulfil his lease, and a careless piece of injustice in the lessee, in not obliging his under tenant to take care of the timber. But I beg leave to give a piece of advise to every landholder, when he lets his land, especially where it is thin of timber, to enjoin it on the tenant to plant a tree to every three or four acres of land yearly, till the land is sufficiently stocked with trees. On

some estates a sufficient number might be collected from its own hedges to perform it. But admitting the tenant planted the sum above mentioned, it would be no great matter ; for it must be a bad estate which would not make a renumeration to a tenant for so trifling an expence ; but besides, his landlord could surely refund his deposit when he paid him his rent. The tenant would be interested in some measure in attending to the nourishment of the young saplings, and in twenty or thirty years time we should see the estates more like fields of plantations than as too many now are — a desert !

The name of the town and liberty is still maintained in its full extent in the parish vestry, both as it respects the paymaster, and the poor who receive parochial relief. The former has a liberty which has been attempted by many over-bearing officers and great paymasters, viz. : a paymaster, without restriction, has a voice in the vestry, and, except as before noted, he is heard with more candour and due respect than in many arbitrary parish vestries in its vicinity. It is a rule at Bradford that no paymaster, under a certain rate or contribution, can be allowed to be heard. The late Edward H. Mortimer, esq. was a great advocate for this rule of moderation. He used to say, that a less opulent person was more likely to know who was in real need of relief, and who imposed, than persons whose rank in life kept them from intimacy with the lower classes of society. And as to relieving the poor, no parish has its equal : for if a person is really industrious, and should have need to apply for relief, there is no abuse or vilifying language used by the vestry, but their case is lamented : neither are they debarred the comforts of life ; for they may appear very well in their dress, &c. though they may receive pecuniary aid. This seems to flow from a proper fountain, viz. as fellow creatures, fellow subjects, and those who are liable to

fellowship in afflictions and reverse of fortune ; they make themselves helpers to bear the burdens of the needy. But those who are making a constant use of, and impose on the generosity of the parish, are sometimes treated with a little more severity ; but still the poor are well relieved, beyond any precedent in the surrounding parishes.

The land tax from its beginning has been paid beyond any other parish of equal dimensions. This was occasioned by the too common adage --- their zeal outran their reason. For when the government proposed the land tax, Trowbridge ran to arms on behalf of the proposed tax, and thought it could not be consistent with their antient loyalty to shrink back from a temporary tax, for so it was understood by many ; therefore they put their land tax far beyond some other parishes, which were considerably greater as to the sum of land they possessed. This was seen when too late ; for when it was made a permanent tax, they saw their error : but the adjoining parish having a very judicious gentleman in it, who was a statesman as well as a rich landholder, advised the parish to be cautious in their zeal, telling them the land tax might continue longer than they expected, &c. : and his advise was followed, and their land tax, though a much larger parish, is much lighter than Trowbridge. However, Trowbridge, like the river Ganges, will force its way through a mountain, rather than be stopped in its progress ; for it pays this weighty tax perhaps with as much ease as those who have been more parsimonious or cautious in manifesting zeal to the government in times of need.

And now I may justly take leave of my history of Trowbridge, which I have, as far as truth permitted, given in the most plain and simple manner : and when any superior historian thinks he can make an improvement on the history, I wish him and the public at large, success in the publication.

The Author's reason for adding the Poem on Slander.

I conceive that no ornament can dignify an author and his work more than truth and candour; and if he intend to shew his work, so as to be supported by his reader, he ought to remove every obtuse sentence from it, by every honest means. This I think binds me to publish these letters alluded to; at least, so much of them as is necessary: otherwise, my readers may be taught to believe my verses to be more of an attack than a defence. Besides I am persuaded that there are many gentlemen, &c. who visit the library for the alone purpose they profess, and to whom such mean actions as is here noted; are unknown.

Note the first, from Mr. Wearing.

"R. Wearing will be obliged if Mr. Bodman will draw him out another prospectus of his intended publication to put into the library, as he has unfortunately mislaid the other. R. W. thinks it would be desireable if Mr. B. could give him some idea of the price, as he has had several enquiries respecting it. And he entertains no doubt but it will be so executed as to meet the most sanguine expectations of the public."

No traveller could have ran with more pleasure at the sound of a voice in a wilderness, than the unsuspicous J. B. to answer this note; and which he scribbled out when almost night, and carried it down to his friendly looking librarian, saying it was incorrect; and wished Mr. W. to correct it before it was exhibited to the public, and had no thought this man, who by a character he sustains (besides librarian) could be guilty of being a betrayer of an unsuspicous man. But I soon found myself deceived by a person calling on me to inform me the said paper was carried about from one library to another. I then went to my innocent friend! who told me he knew nothing of its being carried away, as he had no control over the room. To this I gave implicit credit and was satisfied, till a gentleman informed me first by a letter, and afterwards verbally, that my paper was published in a shameful manner, I then wrote to the printer of the Bath Herald, whose answer was a little evasive. However, on my talking a little pointed to my friend, he seemed agitated. But still declared his innocence of any knowledge of what was done, he delivered up the paper to me: and on some unexpected friends procuring me the Bath Herald, I soon found the pretended verbatim advertisement was nothing more than a grossly mutilated unfinished paper, so as to exhibit as a stigma to every reader,

I then wrote to a respectable friend and tradesmen of Bath, who went to the printers, who candidly said, they had it sent down by a Mr. Wearing, who requested it might be printed verbatim; but they did not think of injuring the publisher, but only did it to oblige their friend. This, my being in a fair way

to fix the charge on the innocent, produced several anonymous letters, &c. and at last to avoid the hunters' pursuit, my hooper assumed a new part of the creation, changing himself into an aquatic creature, which has a great sagacity in evading his pursuers, when he cannot escape otherwise, he will emit something black, which will becloud the water, and so escape. Like this fish, Mr. Wearing sends me a most detestable letter, and after threatening me and telling me my danger, if I made it public, &c. he very wisely slides aside, and tells me Mr. Cooper is ready to take all the blame. This is a fallacy which I forbear at present from motives too delicate to explain or point out the design of. However, as he sustains the two dignified offices, of clerk to a dissenting meeting, and schoolmaster, &c. I shall leave my readers to make their conclusions on his filling those honourable stations, and content myself with describing the flatterer as well as the envious man.

ROAD HILL,

A POEM.

ONE day in trav'ling from the west,
I stopped on Road Hill, to rest :
My friendly muse came tripping by,
With smiling looks, 'ho' seeming shy.

I said, "dame muse, what do you here?"
She said, "I come to give you cheer,"
By representing to your view,
Landscapes of nature, old and new.

Here hills and vales, and pleasant woods,
Luxuriant sights ! the eyes' chief good ;
A feast on nature, which you prize ;
'Twill satiate your longing eyes.

See t'wards the south, on Bratton hill,
Where Alfred fought with sword and bill,
And slew the bloody Danish crew,
Who sought the Britons to subdue.

Surrounding views stand in exquisite dress,
To feed your pensive mind, from east to west ;
Where nature joyn'd to art, strongly combine,
To shew the great creator all divine !

Beneath yon hill, we view amongst the trees,
That pile which long has born assaults from zephyr breeze,
Whose spire stood high, to excite our admiration,
Ninty-three feet above its own foundation.

But, sov'reign pow'r ! twice with a dread command
Destroy'd this spire, with lightnings as his hand !
And several times this noble church and tow'r
Has felt the strokes of his resistless pow'r.

Next comes in sight, old Coulstans shady brow,
With shaggy woods and trees without a row ;
Quite hanging o'er the trav'ller underneath
Is fill'd with awe ; at ev'ry violent breeze.

Yet to the eye, and at a distant view,
They shew a beauty and a grandeur too ;
Tho' whist'ling wind, rues thro' the sounding wood,
And terrifies the ear, yet it affords much good.

Dress'd in her sable, now my muse laments
Some shade which intervenes, and so prevents
Her viewing of that mansion, built at Stoke,
Whose beaut'ous grandeur conquers with a stroke !

But now I move to a north eastern mark,
And view the woods and groves of old Spy park :
The once domain of Baynton's antient race ;
But by demise, we in the rofts can trace.

More to the north stands beaut'ous Bowden hill,
Whose distant prospects the beholder fill ;
This verdant park, where waters rise and roll,
In which a mansion stands to crown the whole.

Now we descend to things more near in sight,
And view the town and spire, which strike us with delight ;
And where my lungs first drew her vital breath,
Yea, where its likely I may yield to death.

The spot where various times and changes wait,
To shew how mutable our human state :
Yet blessings there abound to great and small,
And teach the lesson — God is all in all !

My muse attend me now from east to west,
To view the scenes, which may our thoughts arrest ;
This small delightful spot, where nature smiles ;
And quite enslave the thoughts, and many a one beguile.

Just at my feet what beaut'ous sights appear,
Ledyard's fair mansion, bids us both draw near ;
Here we behold its shrubb'ries and its lawn,
Where bount'ous nature, seems to have a throne.

And just beneath, there opens to its view,
A water-fall, both grand and pleasing too :
Here beaut'ous nature cloth'd her smiling banks,
And trees preserving order, by their ranks.

But my impatient eyes now leave this scene,
And mount yon hill, that's cloth'd in smiling green ;
And amongst its trees, there's built a pleasing cot,
My eyes now feast around this pleasant spot,
And hail its owner in his happy lot.

I turn myself, and to renew my sight,
And by new objects to obtain delight :
Here I behold, built on a little hill,
A plain neat villa, shews the builder's skill ;
Its situation is south west of Road,
And is the residence of Mr. Noad.

But various charms now crow'd upon our sight,
And each concur to give some new delight ;
Yet we must leave these objects now in view,
Yea, to these charming scenes we bid adieu.

Homeward I now pass on, and leave Road hill,
My muse now takes her flight at her own will :
I hail'd and thank'd her for her visit paid,
Her courteous company did to my pleasure add,
While I from pleasing views this poem made.

Some of my sedate and pious readers may be ready to think I have followed the heathen writers and poets too much, by introducing the poem on Road hill, in a figurative manner, &c. But I can assure them that the poem was not a premeditated act of the mind, which was afterwards clothed in images, but a sudden impulse, just as it represents itself to the reader; for I was surprised when the first idea caught my mind. And to use any argument for the poetic manner of the writings of poets, would be vain and useless; because a Thompson, Watts, Milton, Pope, and a vast number of the poets have defended the poet from aspersions on these points.

" We must not overlook even the fictions of the most illustrious poets."

Quintillium.

A POEM.

When some of the wise heads had learn'd my intention,
To publish a work without their own invention ;
To stop my proceeding, they held a consultation,
How they might succeed to stop my publication.

One said, " 'Twill be in vain to attack him directly,
" But if we assail him, let's do it correctly,
" And before he gets ready, we'll publish his work.
" But to accomplish our purpose, in secret we'll lurk.

" But to accomplish our work we cannot well find
" A pretext, by which we may publish his mind :
" But the way to betray him; to answer our end,
" We'll feign to applaud him, as being his friend."

But who can accomplish this wicked intention,
To cut a man's throat by a friendly pretension ?
" Why I," says Smooth Looks, " I'll sign my name
" W — g,
" 'Tis part of my office, for I'm your librarian."

A note he then wrote, pretending as friend,
To obtain such an answer as might suit their end.
" To complete my design on the man, as reverer,
" I'll employ one to publish, my friend Mr. Meyler."

" Well said, my friend W. G., the business is done,
" Send down his own paper to Meyler and Son,
" Say, ' Print it verbatim, but in any wise,
" Put many false letters, the work stigmatize.' "

At length, like the panther, who misses his prey,
And leaps to his thicket to avoid a just fray;
He writes and says, " He's not alone a hooper ; " *
But if I think well, I may fall on a Cooper.

* Where the panthers inhabit, they are called Hoopers, because they betray the traveller by imitating the human voice.

The Envious Man described.

If heav'n forsake, and sin inspire
Some envious man to tune his lyre
With a malicious song,
His envious mind could not be right,
Except he gave a vent to spite,
And made all others wrong.

To furnish out his slanders well,
He'll borrow language from that hell,
Which sets the world in flame.
But ah ! how wicked his design,
Whom satan prompteth to malign
His harmless neighbour's name.

Next he assails the great and brave,
And turns a monarch to a slave,
Yea, makes a man a fiend :
Make heav'n born men as heirs of hell,
Where envious minds for ever dwell,
To attain his wicked ends.

But if th' incarnate fiend proceed,
Nor te his tongue nor pen take heed,
But let his anger burn ;
Then will his envy end in strife,
And malice close his hateful life.
Then he'll with fiends take turn.

These characters cast about fire brands, arrows, and death. They tell you, it is all but in sport. They commit murder with their tongues, and profess to go and stand before God.

I am straitened to choose a new enemy, fearing I might only change names or appellations, but not persons. For first I engaged a serious clerk, as I thought, but in him I soon found a deceitful fellow. Then I dealt with a librarian, and he proved as bad or worse than the former; and he tells me a Mr. Cooper is willing to undertake me, if I choose. Perhaps after he has put me under an operation of mischievous tools, if I have any life remaining, he will recommend me to a secretary, and then I should be liable to be tortured to pieces in body and mind.

* * * *It is proposed to publish a PLAN of the
CASTLE, on a handsome Copper Plate, as soon
as two hundred copies or plates are subscribed for.*

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PLATE

O

Castle

The Plan.

Section of Old Sarum from East to

..... About 420 feet ...

burton, in the reign of
ill and his Son, the Cas-
James the first, we find
as a property, in the
of Lord Burleigh then
ant James sold the ma-
nily it remained till the
ord Granville, who had
Lord Caledon, and fi-
resent proprietor, James

The Wiltshire Topographical Society.

The THIRD ANNIVERSARY MEETING of the Members of this Society will be held at the Chambers of Mr. Alexander, No. 9, John Street, Adelphi, London, on Saturday, the 3rd of June next, at 3 o'clock precisely, when the members are invited to attend, to receive the *Annual Report* of the Council, to nominate Officers for the ensuing year, and on other Business.

The Subscribers are informed that the *First Volume of the Society's Publications* will be ready for delivery on and after the first day of July, and they are solicited to send for their respective copies to either of the Honorary Secretaries; or to state in what way they wish the Books to be forwarded. At the same time they are requested to pay their Second Subscription of One Guinea. It is expected that there will be one if not two more Volumes ready before the Anniversary of 1844.

The *first Volume* contains "A HISTORY OF THE PARISH OF GRITTLETON, by the Rev. J. E. JACKSON, M.A., and an INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON TOPOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE, WITH REFERENCES TO, AND ACCOUNTS OF, NATIONAL AND LOCAL RECORDS AND AUTHORITIES; being the Main Sources of Authentic Local History: also a GLOSSARY of Topographical and Archœological Terms, by JOHN BRITTON, F.S.A., &c."

JOHN BRITTON,
17, Burton Street,
GEORGE ALEXANDER,
9, John Street, Adelphi,

} *Hon. Secs.*

London, May 27th, 1843.

respectfully to send you the EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT, with a ~~copy~~ of the Six New Tracts which have been published during the last year, viz.—Five of the Larger Series:—

No. LXXX. entitled "Short Sermons on Subjects connected with the Form of Absolution in the Morning and Evening Services of the Church of England."

No. LXXXI. "The Church-Yard; or an Address to the Throne of Mercy, from the Confines of the Grave."

No. LXXXII. "Popery compared with Paganism, and brought to the Test of the Holy Scriptures; or Hints addressed to plain People."

No. LXXXIII. "A short Account of the Life and Martyrdom of the Rev. Lawrence Saunders, Rector of Allhallows, London, who was burnt at Coventry, in the reign of Queen Mary."

No. LXXXIV. "A short Account of Popery, or the Religion of the Church of Rome."

Also of the Tracts for Children and Sunday Schools:—

No. XVI. "An Historical Catechism on the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The following Tracts have been reprinted during the Year:—

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